

**For Council Comments
section of the Agenda:**

Density Discussion

WESTFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Request

Establishment of policy defining density.

Exhibits

- 1) Draft Definitions, April 23, 2007
- 2) Density Definitions from Neighboring Communities, April 27, 2007
- 3) Developer Forum Discussion, April 27, 2007

SUMMARY

The Standards Committee provided the Advisory Plan Commission with a set of draft definitions regarding density (see Exhibit 1). At the April 23, 2007 Advisory Plan Commission meeting, the commission members discussed the draft definitions. They decided to table the discussion until the May 29, 2007 APC meeting, in order for each member to have adequate time to evaluate and provide feedback on the draft definitions. The APC also requested that the Town Council review, discuss, and provide feedback to the APC regarding this issue. In order to help with their evaluation, the APC requested additional information from Staff regarding definitions from neighboring communities (see Exhibit 2). That information was distributed to the APC on April 27, 2007. On April 26, 2007, the Town hosted a forum with local developers. At that meeting, the development community shared their feedback on the draft density definitions (see Exhibit 3).

PROCEDURAL

This item is on the agenda for discussion purposes only. No formal action is required at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss and provide feedback to the Advisory Plan Commission for their consideration at their May 29, 2007 meeting.

TOWN OF WESTFIELD

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

WESTFIELD-WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
ADVISORY PLAN COMMISSION
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
ZONING ENFORCEMENT
BUILDING PERMITS

NET DENSITY & GROSS DENSITY DEFINITIONS

- **GROSS ACREAGE** – Shall be determined for a parcel of land based on the acreage reported on the most current Washington Township Assessors Property Record Card (Property Card). If a Property Card is not available for a parcel of land, then the acreage reported on an American Land Title Association/American Congress of Surveying & Mapping (ALTA/ACSM) Land Title Survey of the parcel shall be used.
- **NET ACREAGE** – Shall be determined by subtracting unbuildable land from the GROSS ACREAGE. Unbuildable land is defined as:
 - Public Right-of-Way (roads, streets, trails, etc...)
 - Private Streets
 - Wetlands (per the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
 - Legal Drains
 - Floodplains
 - Steep Slopes (>12%)
 - Utility Easements (pipelines, high-tension power lines, sewer, etc...)
 - Required Open Space
 - Required Stormwater Retention/Detention Ponds
 - Existing Structures
- **GROSS RESIDENTIAL DENSITY** – Shall be determined by using the following formula:

$$\text{Gross Residential Density} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Dwelling Units}}{\text{GROSS ACREAGE}}$$

- **NET RESIDENTIAL DENSITY** – Shall be determined by using the following formula:

$$\text{Net Residential Density} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Dwelling Units}}{\text{NET ACREAGE} - \text{Improved Nonresidential Uses Acreage}}$$

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April 27, 2007

DENSITY DISCUSSION

At the April 23, 2007 Advisory Plan Commission meeting, the Commissioners asked to see the definitions of 'Net Density' and 'Gross Density' that Westfield's neighboring communities are currently using. This list is a culmination of research into the Definitions sections of the zoning ordinances for Carmel, Fishers, Noblesville, Zionsville, and Hamilton County.

CARMEL

- Area, Gross – Entire area of project or platted area.
- Density, Gross – The total number of Dwelling Units divided by the Gross Area in acres.
- *Net Area & Net Density – not defined.*

FISHERS

- Lot Area – That net area remaining within the site after the deduction of all dedicated rights-of-way, easements for utilities, drainage, sanitary sewers and storm water retention/detention ponds.
- *Gross Acreage, Gross Density & Net Density – not defined.*

NOBLESVILLE

- Density – A unit of measurement; the number of dwelling units per acre of land.
- Density, Gross – The number of dwelling units per acre of the total land to be developed, including public rights-of-way.
- Density, Net – The number of dwelling units per acre of land when the acreage involved includes only the land devoted to residential uses, excluding public right-of-way, floodplains, wetlands, and other public lands.

- *Gross Acreage & Net Acreage – not specifically defined outside of the density definitions.*

ZIONSVILLE

- Density, Gross – A unit of measurement which represents the number of units per acre of land on the aggregate total land to be developed.
- *Gross Acreage, Net Acreage & Net Density – not defined.*

HAMILTON COUNTY

- Density, Gross – A unit of measurement which represents the number of structures per acre of the aggregate total land to be developed, including all public rights-of-way, public easements, and other public uses.
- Density, Net – A unit of measurement which represents the number of structures per acre of that land which is devoted only to a specific area use, excluding public rights-of-way, public easements, and other areas dedicated to public use.
- *Gross Acreage & Net Acreage – not specifically defined outside of the density definitions.*

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April 27, 2007

DEVELOPER FORUM – DENSITY DISCUSSION

At the April 26, 2007 Developer Forum, the consensus from the group was that GROSS ACREAGE and GROSS DENSITY is a less subjective and more predictable measure than NET ACREAGE and NET DENSITY. The group communicated that the industry-standard is GROSS ACREAGE and GROSS DENSITY, and they recommended that the Town not use NET ACREAGE or NET DENSITY. Further discussion at the meeting resulted in the following definitions:

- **GROSS ACREAGE** – Shall be determined for a parcel of land based on the acreage reported on an American Land Title Association/American Congress of Surveying & Mapping (ALTA/ACSM) Land Title Survey of the parcel.
- **GROSS RESIDENTIAL DENSITY** – Shall be determined by using the following formula:

$$\text{Gross Residential Density} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Dwelling Units}}{\text{GROSS ACREAGE}}$$